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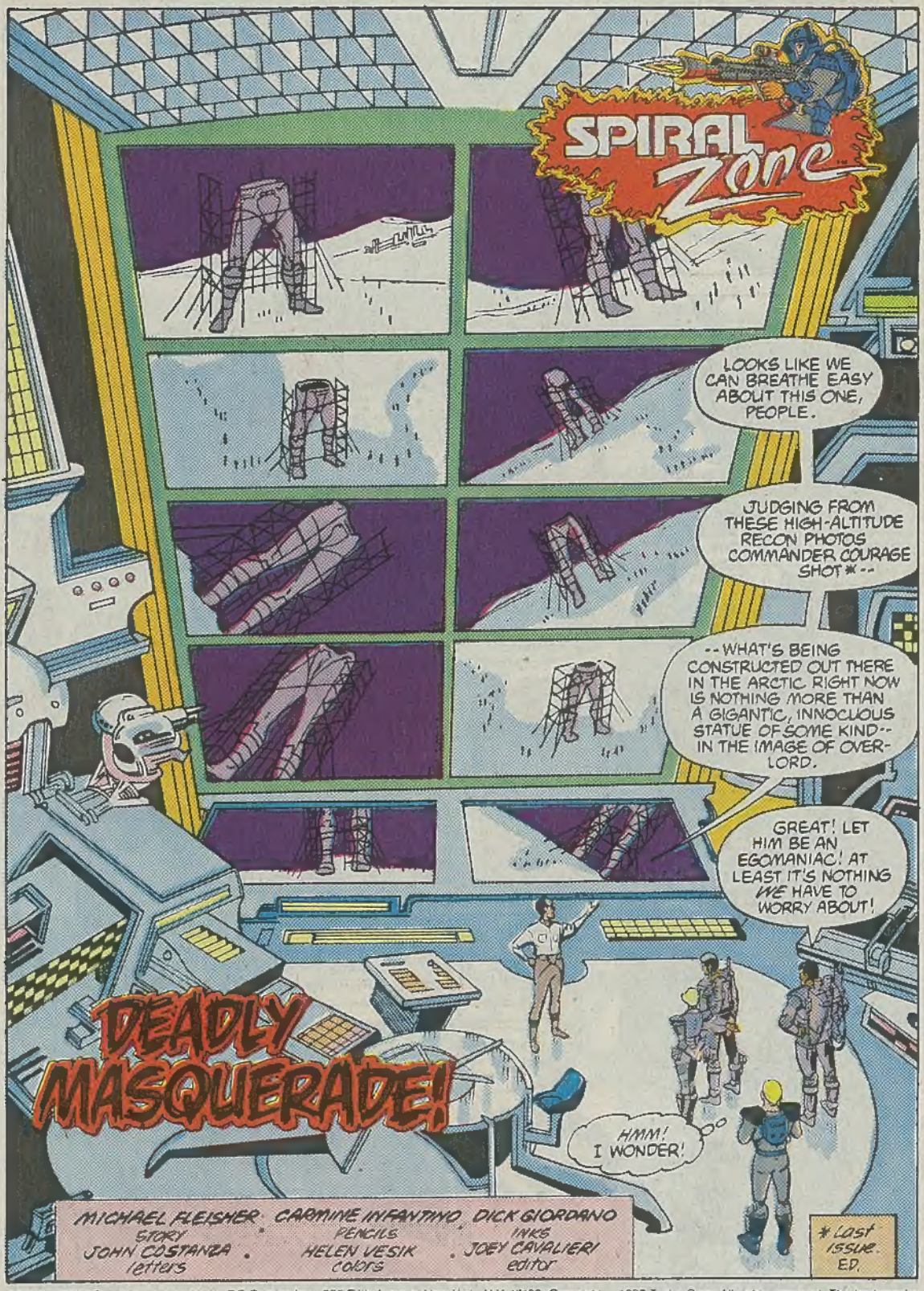
SPIRAL ZONE™
STOP HER! SHE'S A TRAITOR TO THE ZONE RIDERS!™
DIRK™
KAT™
HIRO™
MAX™
TANK™


SPIRAL Zone
LOOKS LIKE WE CAN BREATHE EASY ABOUT THIS ONE, PEOPLE.
JUDGING FROM THESE HIGH-ALTITUDE RECON PHOTOS COMMANDER COURAGE SHOT* --
--WHAT'S BEING CONSTRUCTED OUT THERE IN THE ARCTIC RIGHT NOW IS NOTHING MORE THAN A GIGANTIC, INNOCUOUS STATUE OF SOME KIND-- IN THE IMAGE OF OVER-LORD.
GREAT! LET HIM BE AN EGOMANIAC! AT LEAST IT'S NOTHING WE HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT!
DEADLY MASQUERADE!
HMM! I WONDER!
MICHAEL FLEISHER story
JOHN COSTANZA letters
CARMINE INFANTINO pencils
HELEN VESIK colors
DICK GIORDANO inks
JOEY CAVALIERI editor
*LAST ISSUE. ED.

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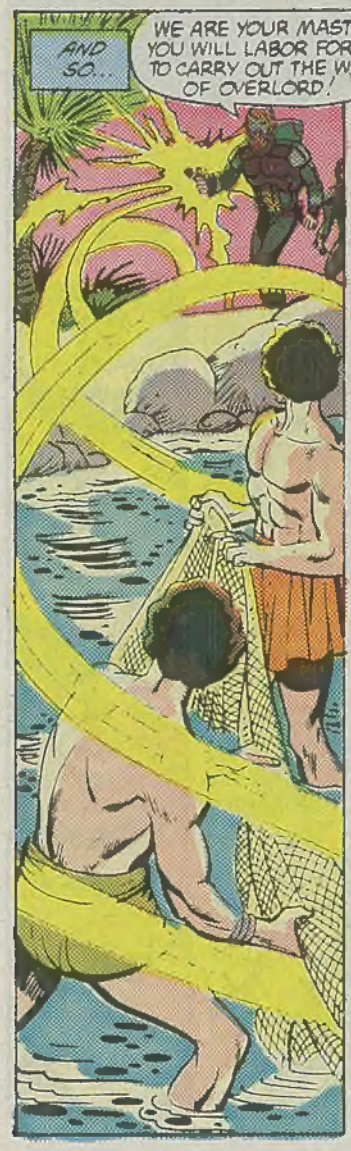
YOU WERE AWFULLY QUIET IN THERE, COMMANDER. SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
NOTHING I CAN QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON, KAT.
I AM AWFULLY WORRIED ABOUT TANK THOUGH. HE'S VANISHED COMPLETELY--
--AND NO WORD--
HIMMEL, COMMANDER!
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO LOSE SLEEP OVER A CRUSTY OLD SOLDIER LIKE ME!
TANK! THANK HEAVEN! BUT WHERE IN THE WORLD--
THE ZONE, KATERINA.
I WENT THERE HOPING TO RESCUE MY SON, JOSEPH...
... ONLY TO FIND I'D BEEN LURED INTO A CAREFULLY LAID TRAP!
THEIR PLAN WAS TO TAKE AWAY MY NEUTRON ARMOR...
... AND LET THE BALEFUL ATMOSPHERE OF THE SPIRAL ZONE TRANSFORM ME INTO A MINDLESS ZONER.
BUT I MANAGED, THANK HEAVEN, TO WRENCH FREE OF MY CAPTORS--
--AND FLEE IN A HAIL OF WEAPONS FIRE!
2

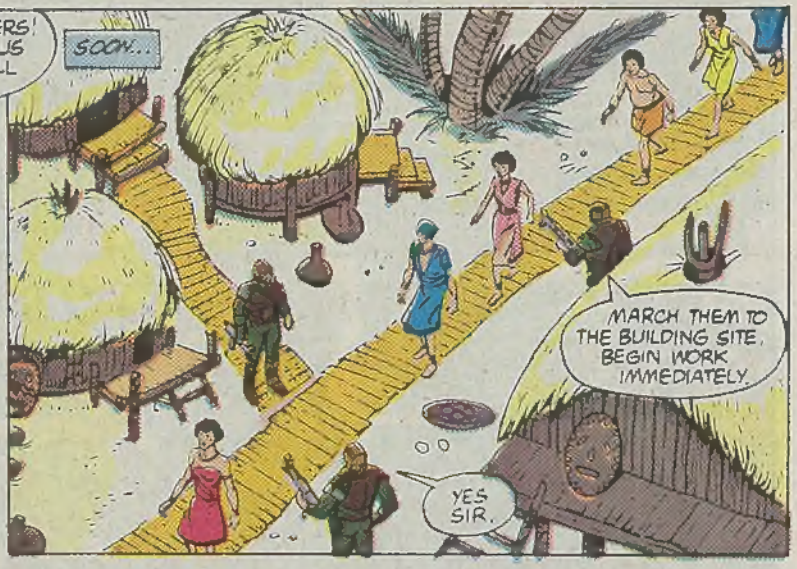
"STRIVING DESPERATELY TO ELUDE OVERLORD'S ZONE TROOPERS--
"--I SOON FOUND MYSELF IN A ZONE SECTOR WHERE I HAD NEVER BEEN BEFORE!
"WITHOUT REALIZING IT, I HAD INFILTRATED THE PERIMETER OF A HEAVILY PATROLLED LAUNCH SITE...
"DETERMINED TO UNCOVER WHATEVER MILITARY SECRETS I COULD, I INCHED CLOSER.
"THERE ON THE TARMAC STOOD THE INTRUDER, A STATE-OF-THE-ART AIRCRAFT THAT CAN ONLY HAVE BEEN DESIGNED BY OVERLORD HIMSELF...
"AND YET IT WAS NOT THE CRAFT ITSELF THAT RIVETED MY ATTENTION...
"RATHER IT WAS THE BIZARRE DEVICE WHICH THE ZONE TROOPS WERE IN THE PROCESS OF MOUNTING ON BOARD THE CRAFT --
"--A DIABOLICAL ZONE-POD CANNON WHICH, ONCE INSTALLED--
"--WOULD RENDER THE INTRUDER CAPABLE OF COMPLETING THE PROCESS OF WORLD-WIDE ZONIFICATION THAT OVERLORD HAD ONLY HALF-COMPLETED AFTER HIJACKING NASA'S ION-POWERED SHUTTLE...!"*
* AS RECOUNTED LAST ISSUE. --ED.
3

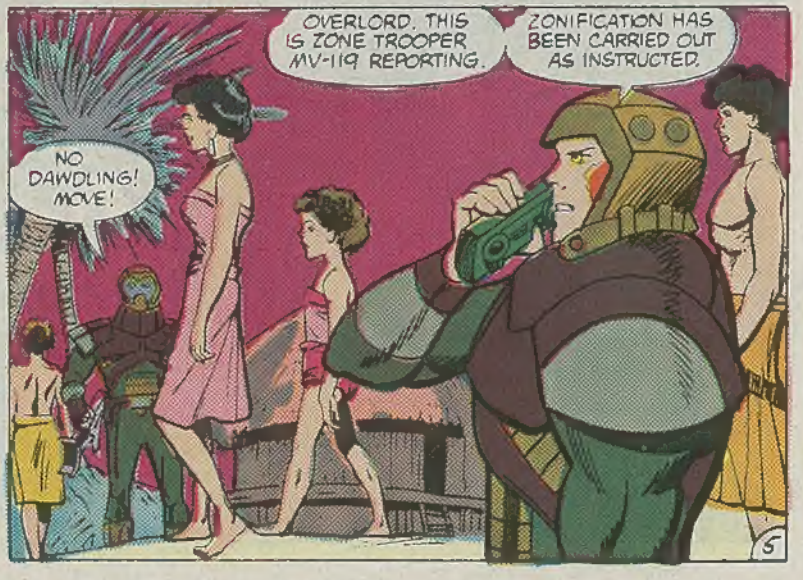
NEEDLESS TO SAY, COMMANDER, I RETURNED HERE TO MISSION COMMAND CENTRAL AS FAST AS I COULD.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE OFF ALONE, TANK. YOU WORRIED US ALL!
DID YOU FIND YOUR SON, TANK?
SAY, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU DIDN'T MENTION IF YOU'D BROUGHT HIM OUT WITH YOU.
BLAST YOU, MAX!
IF I HAD RESCUED JOEY, DON'T YOU THINK I'D HAVE SAID SOMETHING?
HEY, COOL IT, GUY!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU TENSE.
UM, I AM SORRY, MAX. IT IS JUST THAT, WITH JOEY TRAPPED IN THE ZONE...
...I HAVE BEEN UNDER A GREAT STRAIN.
MEANWHILE, FAR AWAY, ON A LONELY ATOLL IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC...
THE FIRST VILLAGE IS OVER THIS WAY.
C'MON.
BREAK OUT THE ZONE EFFECT CANNON! AND KEEP YOUR WEAPONS ON STUN!
HARM NO ONE. WE NEED THESE VILLAGERS TO DO THE HARD WORK FOR US.
4

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

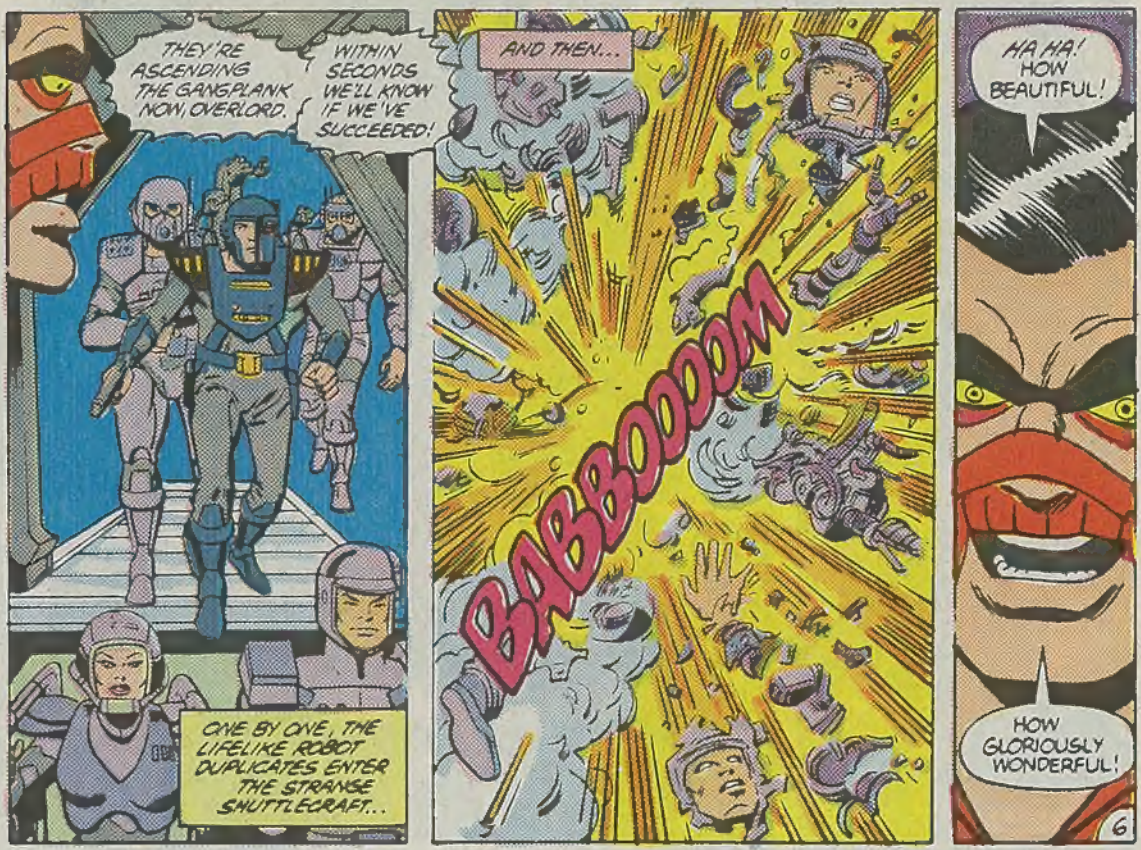
PRESENTLY...
ZONIFICATION IS PROCEEDING AS USUAL.
ALREADY THEY ARE COMPLIANT AND OBEDIENT TO OUR COMMANDS.
EXCELLENT. WE WILL PROCEED NOW TO ZONIFY THE REMAINING VILLAGES.


AND SO...
WE ARE YOUR MASTERS! YOU WILL LABOR FOR US TO CARRY OUT THE WILL OF OVERLORD!

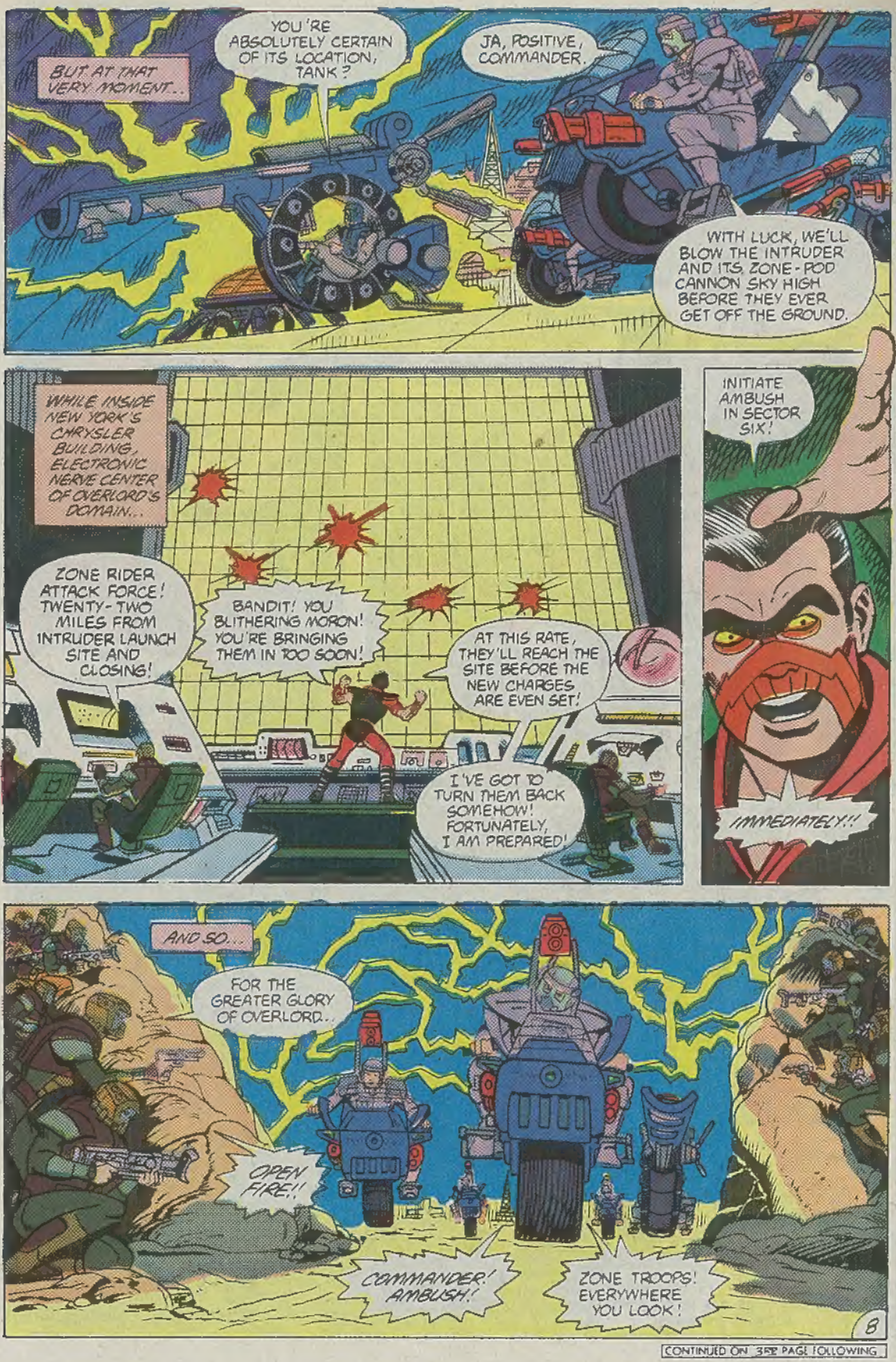

SOON...
MARCH THEM TO THE BUILDING SITE, BEGIN WORK IMMEDIATELY.
YES SIR.


OVERLORD, THIS IS ZONE TROOPER MV-119 REPORTING.
ZONIFICATION HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT AS INSTRUCTED.
NO DAWDLING! MOVE!

WE ARE COMMENCING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE.
HEH HEHHH! EXCELLENT. PROCEED.
I'LL CONTINUE MONITORING YOUR PROGRESS ONCE I'VE RETURNED TO MY HEADQUARTERS.
OUR DECOY MOCK-UP OF THE INTRUDER IS READY FOR TESTING, OVERLORD.
AS PER YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, IT HAS BEEN BUILT TO DUPLICATE THE REAL INTRUDER IN VIRTUALLY EVERY RESPECT.
GOOD. CLEAR THE SITE.
WE'LL DIRECT OUR ZONE RIDER ANDROIDS TO BOARD THE CRAFT VIA REMOTE CONTROL.


THEY'RE ASCENDING THE GANGPLANK NOW, OVERLORD.
WITHIN SECONDS WE'LL KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED!
ONE BY ONE, THE LIFELIKE ROBOT DUPLICATES ENTER THE STRANGE SHUTTLECRAFT..
AND THEN...
BABBOOOOM
HA HA! HOW BEAUTIFUL!
HOW GLORIOUSLY WONDERFUL!

LITTLE DO DIRK COURAGE AND HIS GULLIBLE ZONE RIDERS SUSPECT THAT THE REAL SGT. "PANK" SCHMIDT IS STILL VERY MUCH MY PRISONER--
--WHILE THE MAN THEY BELIEVE IS SGT. SCHMIDT IS ACTUALLY MY HENCHMAN BANDIT IN DISGUISE!
WAM
SOON, VERY SOON, HE WILL LEAD THEM HERE TO INVESTIGATE THAT FICTITIOUS TALE WE CONCOCTED ABOUT A "ZONE-POD CANNON"!
AND ONE FULL MINUTE AFTER THEY SET FOOT INSIDE OUR DECOY INTRUDER...
...I'LL (HA HA) BLOW THEM STRAIGHT TO BITS, JUST LIKE THOSE ANDROIDS!
FEAR NOT, OVERLORD! THE TASK MAY TAKE US SEVERAL HOURS--
HURRY, FOOL! CLEAR AWAY THAT DEMOLISHED WRECKAGE AND SET UP THE NEXT BOOBY-TRAPPED SHUTTLECRAFT IN ITS PLACE!
--BUT THE DEATHTRAP WILL BE READY!
IT MUST BE FULLY ASSEMBLED BY THE TIME THE REAL ZONE RIDERS ARRIVE!


BUT AT THAT VERY MOMENT..
YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN OF ITS LOCATION, TANK?
JA, POSITIVE, COMMANDER.
WITH LUCK, WE'LL BLOW THE INTRUDER AND ITS ZONE-POD CANNON SKY HIGH BEFORE THEY EVER GET OFF THE GROUND.
WHILE INSIDE NEW YORK'S CHRYSLER BUILDING, ELECTRONIC NERVE CENTER OF OVERLORD'S DOMAIN...
ZONE RIDER ATTACK FORCE! TWENTY-TWO MILES FROM INTRUDER LAUNCH SITE AND CLOSING!
BANDIT! YOU BLITHERING MORON! YOU'RE BRINGING THEM IN TOO SOON!
AT THIS RATE, THEY'LL REACH THE SITE BEFORE THE NEW CHARGES ARE EVEN SET!
I'VE GOT TO TURN THEM BACK SOMEHOW! FORTUNATELY, I AM PREPARED!
INITIATE AMBUSH IN SECTOR SIX!
IMMEDIATELY!!
AND SO...
FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF OVERLORD..
OPEN FIRE!!
COMMANDER! AMBUSH!
ZONE TROOPS! EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK!
8
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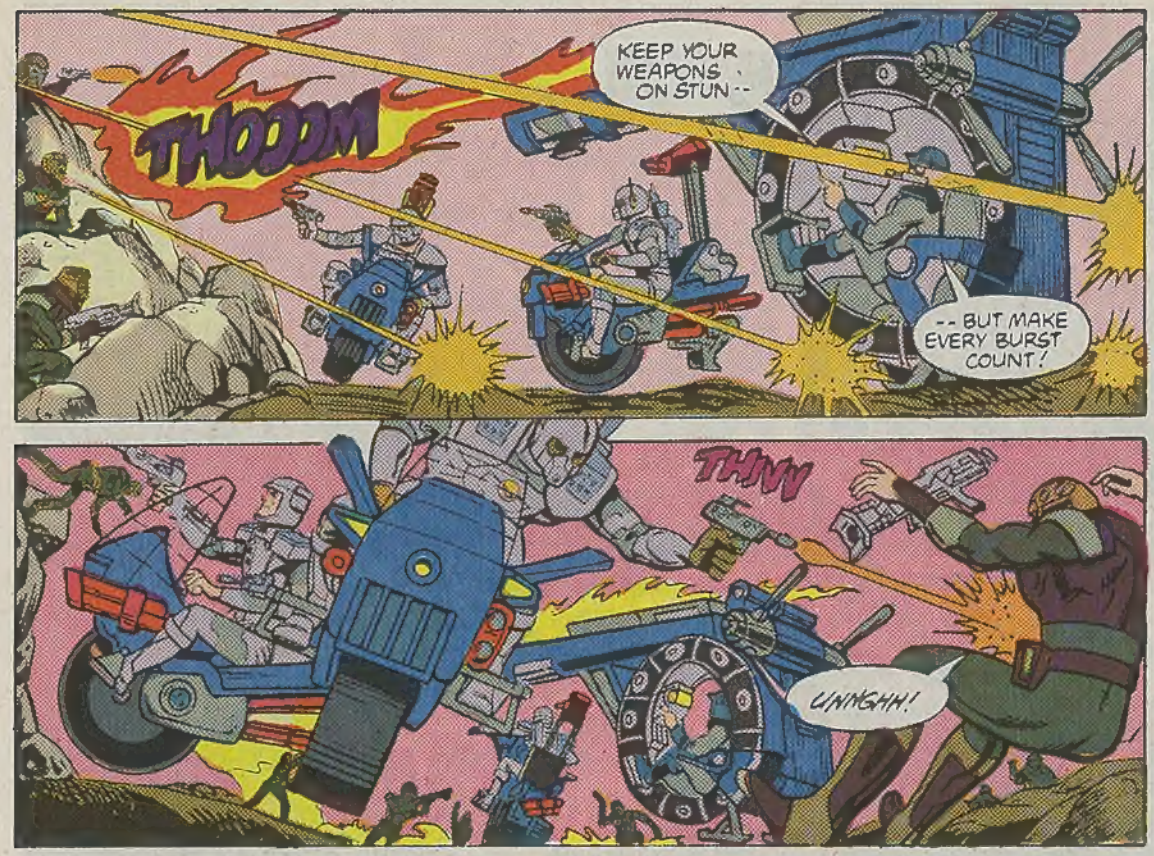
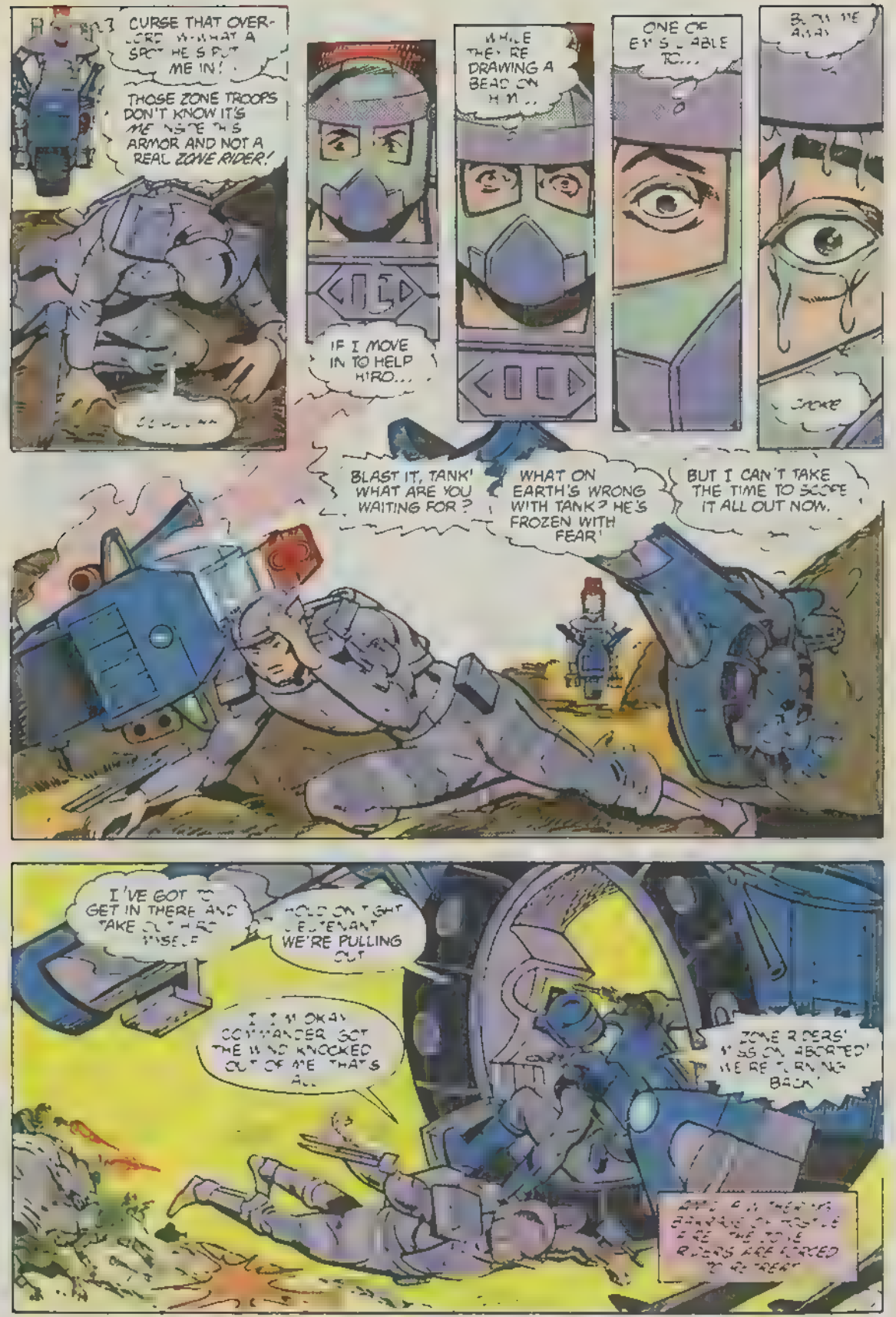
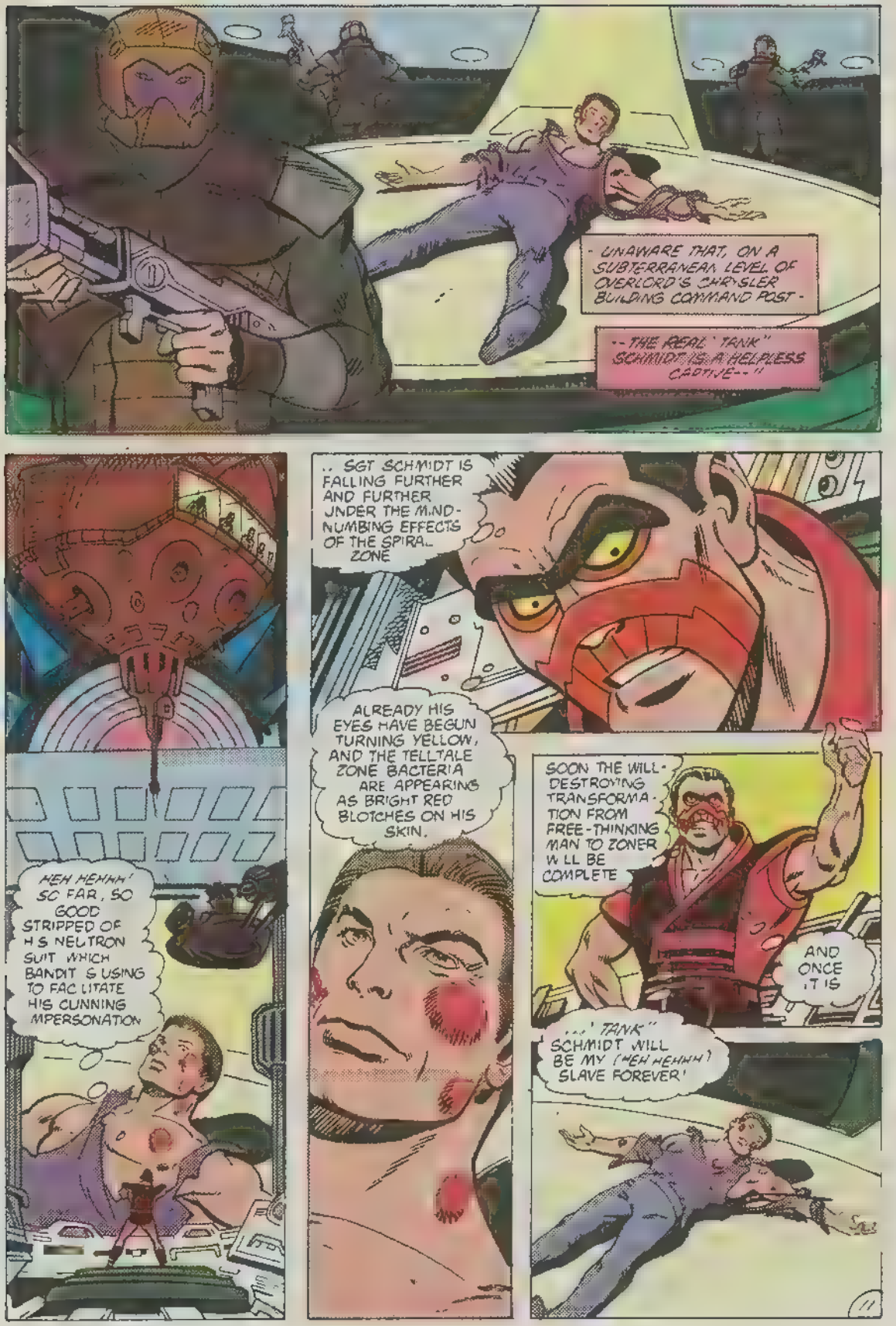
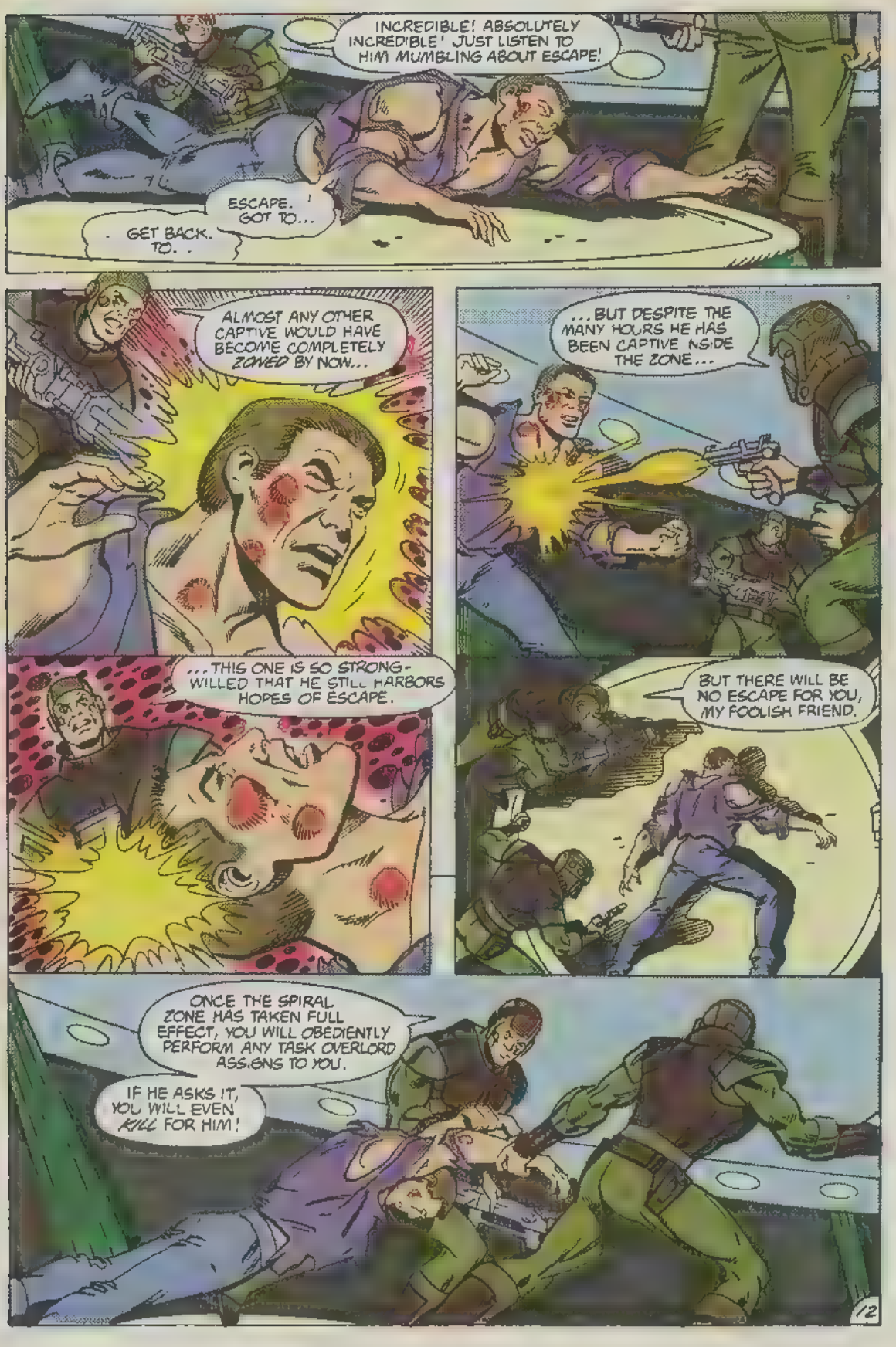
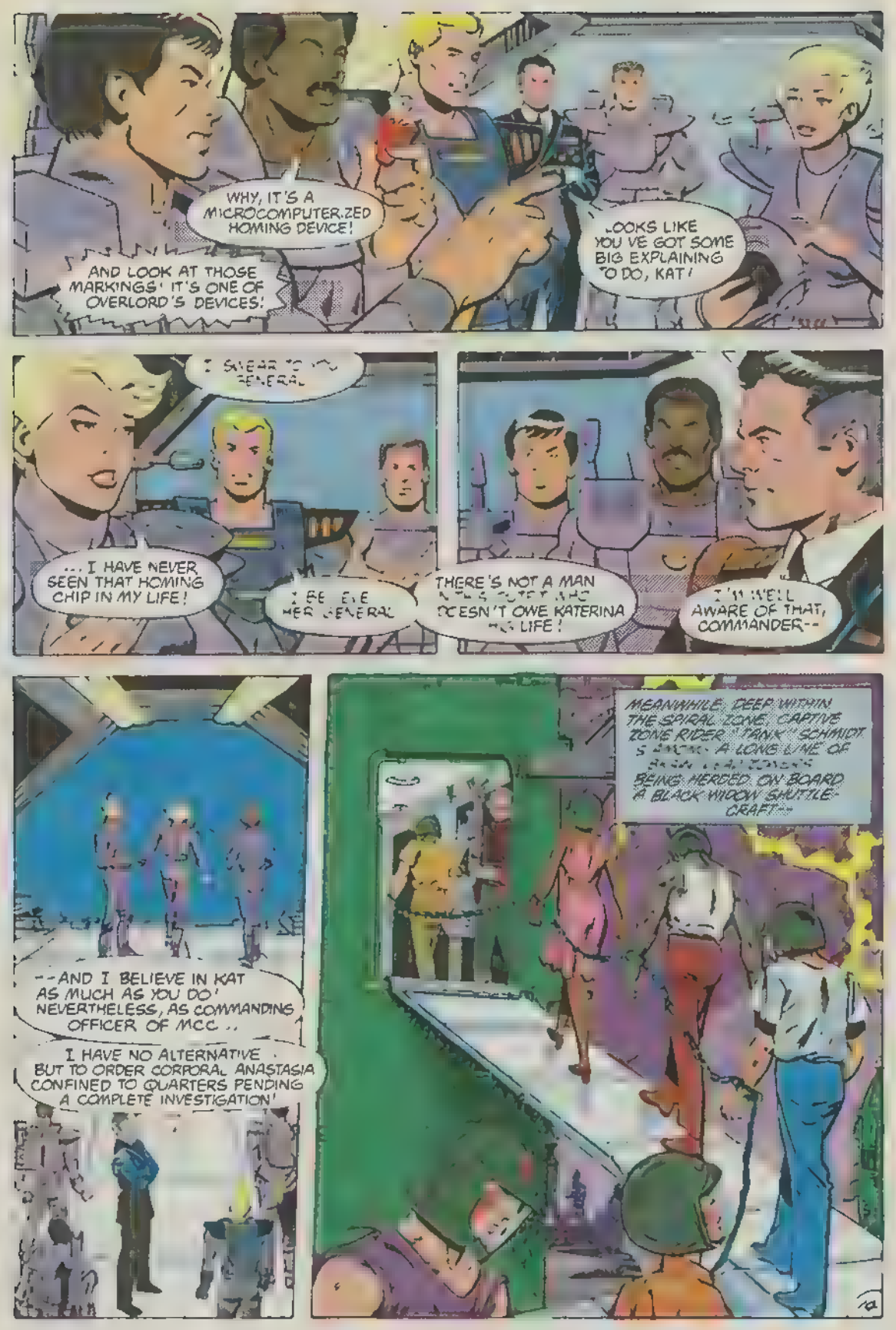

THOOOM
KEEP YOUR WEAPONS ON STUN--
-- BUT MAKE EVERY BURST COUNT!
THWV
UNNGHH!
THEY'RE TRYING TO ENCIRCLE US!
DON'T--
AAAAA--!!
GREAT SUNS!
HIRO'S BEEN HIT!
TANK! I'LL COVER YOU!
YOU GET HIRO OUT OF THERE BEFORE THEY HAVE TIME TO ZERO IN ON HIM!
UH, YEAH. RIGHT.


CURSE THAT OVER-LORD HIRO! WHAT A SPOT HE'S PUT ME IN!
THOSE ZONE TROOPS DON'T KNOW IT'S ME INSIDE THIS ARMOR AND NOT A REAL ZONE RIDER!
IF I MOVE IN TO HELP HIRO...
WHILE THEY'RE DRAWING A BEAD ON HIM...
ONE OF 'EM'S LIABLE TO...
BUT I'VE GOT TO...
BLAST IT, TANK! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
WHAT ON EARTH'S WRONG WITH TANK? HE'S FROZEN WITH FEAR!
BUT I CAN'T TAKE THE TIME TO SCOPE IT ALL OUT NOW.
I'VE GOT TO GET IN THERE AND TAKE OUT THAT SUB MYSELF!
HOLD ON TIGHT LIEUTENANT WE'RE PULLING OUT
I'M OKAY COMMANDER GOT THE WIND KNOCKED OUT OF ME THAT'S ALL...
ZONE RIDERS! MISSION ABORTED! WE'RE TURNING BACK!
AND SO IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE THE ZONE RIDERS ARE FORCED TO RETREAT


- UNAWARE THAT, ON A SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL OF OVERLORD'S CHRYSLER BUILDING COMMAND POST -
-- THE REAL "TANK" SCHMIDT IS A HELPLESS CAPTIVE --"
HEH HEHHH! SO FAR, SO GOOD STRIPPED OF H S NEUTRON SUIT WHICH BANDIT S USING TO FAC LITATE HIS CUNNING MPERSONATION
.. SGT SCHMIDT IS FALLING FURTHER AND FURTHER UNDER THE MIND-NUMBING EFFECTS OF THE SPIRAL ZONE
ALREADY HIS EYES HAVE BEGUN TURNING YELLOW, AND THE TELLTALE ZONE BACTERIA ARE APPEARING AS BRIGHT RED BLOTCHES ON HIS SKIN.
SOON THE WILL-DESTROYING TRANSFORMATION FROM FREE-THINKING MAN TO ZONER W LL BE COMPLETE
AND ONCE IT IS
... "TANK" SCHMIDT WILL BE MY (HEH HEHHH) SLAVE FOREVER!


INCREDIBLE! ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE! JUST LISTEN TO HIM MUMBLING ABOUT ESCAPE!
ESCAPE. I GOT TO...
GET BACK. TO..
ALMOST ANY OTHER CAPTIVE WOULD HAVE BECOME COMPLETELY ZONED BY NOW...
...BUT DESPITE THE MANY HOURS HE HAS BEEN CAPTIVE INSIDE THE ZONE...
...THIS ONE IS SO STRONG-WILLED THAT HE STILL HARBORS HOPES OF ESCAPE.
BUT THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPE FOR YOU, MY FOOLISH FRIEND.
ONCE THE SPIRAL ZONE HAS TAKEN FULL EFFECT, YOU WILL OBEDIENTLY PERFORM ANY TASK OVERLORD ASSIGNS TO YOU.
IF HE ASKS IT, YOU WILL EVEN KILL FOR HIM!

LATER, BACK AT MISSION COMMAND CENTER...
YOU ACTED LIKE A GREEN RECRUIT OUT THERE, TANK! WHAT HAPPENED?
I... I DON'T KNOW, COMMANDER!
BUT I FEEL *TERRIBLE* ABOUT IT!
AN APOLOGY WON'T CUT IT, TANK. YOUR FAILURE TO ACT NEARLY COST THE LIFE OF A FELLOW ZONE RIDER.
DON'T BE SO HARD ON TANK, GEN. MCFARLAND.
MAX'S RIGHT.
TANK'S UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH FOR HIS SON WAS AN EXCRUCIATING ORDEAL!
NO, KAT! THAT'S NOT ALL OF IT! IT CAN'T BE!
THOSE ZONE TROOPERS WERE *LAYING* FOR US OUT THERE! THEY *KNEW* WE WERE COMING!
WHA--!? SOMETHING SMALL AND SHINY'S JUST FALLEN OUT OF KAT'S UNIFORM.
I'D BETTER--
HOLY SMOKES!
COMMANDER COURAGE, GEN. MCFARLAND
LOOK AT THIS!
3


WHY, IT'S A MICROCOMPUTERIZED HOMING DEVICE!
AND LOOK AT THOSE MARKINGS! IT'S ONE OF OVERLORD'S DEVICES!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT SOME BIG EXPLAINING TO DO, KAT!
I SWEAR TO MY GENERAL
... I HAVE NEVER SEEN THAT HOMING CHIP IN MY LIFE!
I BE BE HER GENERAL
THERE'S NOT A MAN DOESN'T OWE KATERINA HIS LIFE!
I'M WELL AWARE OF THAT, COMMANDER--
--AND I BELIEVE IN KAT AS MUCH AS YOU DO! NEVERTHELESS, AS COMMANDING OFFICER OF MCC ..
I HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE . BUT TO ORDER CORPORAL ANASTASIA CONFINED TO QUARTERS PENDING A COMPLETE INVESTIGATION!
MEANWHILE, DEEP WITHIN THE SPIRAL ZONE, CAPTIVE ZONE RIDER "TANK" SCHMIDT'S [illegible] A LONG LINE OF [illegible] BEING HERDED ON BOARD A BLACK WIDOW SHUTTLE CRAFT--

-- FOR TRANSPORT TO AN AS-YET-UNDISCLOSED DESTINATION--!!
ZONER LABOR TRANSPORT NUMBER FOUR PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF.
S, X.. FIVE.. FOUR THREE TWO .
ONE .
IGNITION !!
BACK AT MCC, AS DARKNESS FALLS...
NOTHING PERSONAL CORPORAL, BUT MY ORDERS ARE TO GUARD YOU ROUND THE CLOCK TIL GEN MCFARLAND'S INQUIRY S BEEN COMPLETED
I M NOT INSULTED, GUARDSMAN BESIDES...
...I DON'T NTEND TO BE COOPED UP HERE LONG ENOUGH TO HAVE MY FEELINGS HURT!
UUUUMH.
THE OVERPOWERED GUARD IS HASTILY BOUND AND GAGGED.
AND WITHIN MOMENTS
THERE'S NOT A SECOND TO LOSE.
EVEN NOW, COMMANDER COURAGE AND THE OTHERS ARE HEADED BACK TO THE ZONE TO TRY TO DESTROY OVER-LORD'S ZONE-POD CANNON

IT'S CORPORAL ANASTASIA! STOP HER!
FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY, STAY BACK!
SINCE I KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT MICROCHIP HOMING DEVICE WAS NOT MY OWN, IT HAD TO HAVE BEEN PLANTED ON ME BY ONE OF THE OTHERS.
HALT!
HALT OR WE'LL--
AAAAAHH!
IT CAN ONLY MEAN THAT ONE OF THE ZONE RIDERS IS A TRAITOR!
VROOOOM
CORPORAL ANASTASIA! D-DON'T MAKE ME SHOOT!
SHOOT ME, FOOL, AND THE LIVES OF THE ZONE RIDERS MAY WELL BE FORFEIT!
NOW STAND ASIDE!!
GASP! DO YOU BELIEVE HER?
DON'T KNOW! BUT THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD'VE STOPPED HER ANYHOW!
UNLESS I REACH THEM IN TIME, THERE COULD BE A...A MASSACRE!
GOT TO GET MY HELMET AND JOIN THE OTHERS!
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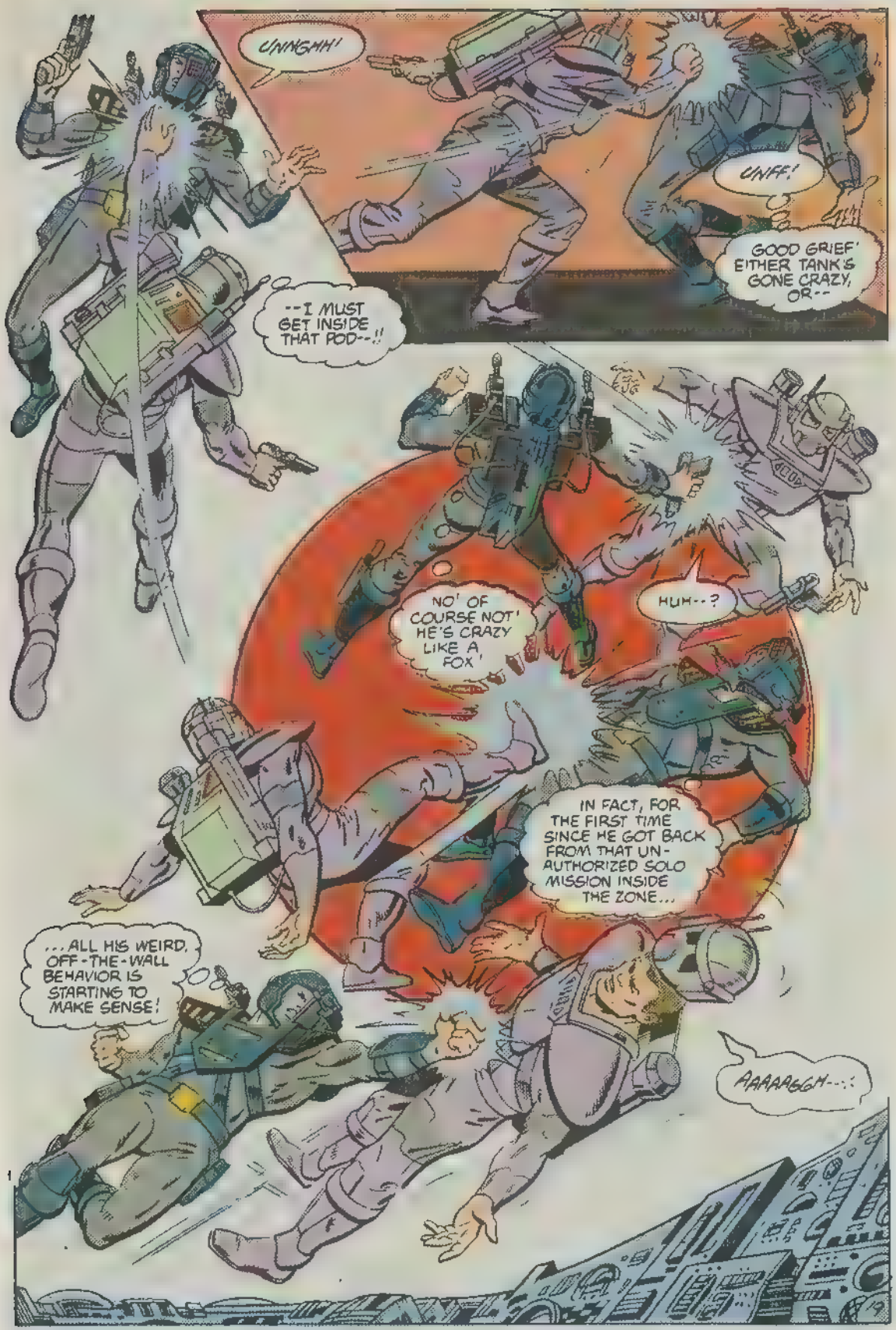
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

UND HERE.
GEE, ER, THIS BABY'S PRETTY FAR GONE. WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO LEAVE IT HERE.
LOOSE TURBO-CHARGER BOLT, THAT'S ALL IT WAS.
THAT'S JUST WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO SAY!
DON'T SWEAT IT, TANK. ANYBODY COULD'VE MISSED IT
IT'LL BE FIRED AGAIN IN A JIFFY.
RIDERS ARE ON THEIR WAY AGA

THIS IS IT! WE MADE IT!
PRETTY STRANGE FOR THEM TO LEAVE IT UNGUARDED,
WE'LL SET SOME CHARGES AND BLOW THIS BABY TO SMITHEREENS RIGHT ON THE PAD!
IN EXACTLY ONE MINUTE, OVERLORD'S PLANNING ON BLASTING THIS HEAP SKY HIGH!
CONCEALED IN THE TAIL SECTION!
IT, TANK
I WANT YOU UP HERE WITH ME, SO WE CAN SET
SO IS FOLLOWING ORDERS, MISTER!
FORTY-FIVE MORE SECON AND THIS DECOY


UNNGMH!
UNFF!
GOOD GRIEF! EITHER TANK'S GONE CRAZY, OR--
--I MUST GET INSIDE THAT POD--!!
NO! OF COURSE NOT! HE'S CRAZY LIKE A FOX!
HUH--?
IN FACT, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HE GOT BACK FROM THAT UN-AUTHORIZED SOLO MISSION INSIDE THE ZONE...
...ALL HIS WEIRD, OFF-THE-WALL BEHAVIOR IS STARTING TO MAKE SENSE!
AAAAAGGH--!

THIS GUY SAYS TANK SCHMIDT
-- ANY MORE THAN I AM!
BANDIT!!
YOU MEAN IT'S BANDIT, COMMANDER -- IN TANK'S SUIT?
RIGHT! AND WE'VE WALKED RIGHT INTO A TRAP!
HE MUST BE THE ONE WHO PLANTED THE BUG ON KAT!
BLAST THOSE ZONE RIDERS!
I CAN'T BLOW THEM UP NOW WITHOUT KILLING MY OWN SECOND-IN-COMMAND
THIS SHUTTLECRAFT COULD BLOW ANY SECOND! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
WE'LL BRING HIM OUTSIDE WITH US AND TAKE OFF HIS NEUTRON SUIT.
I ONLY WISH THERE WERE SOME WAY WE COULD FIND OUT WHERE THEY'VE GOT TANK
FOOLS! DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!

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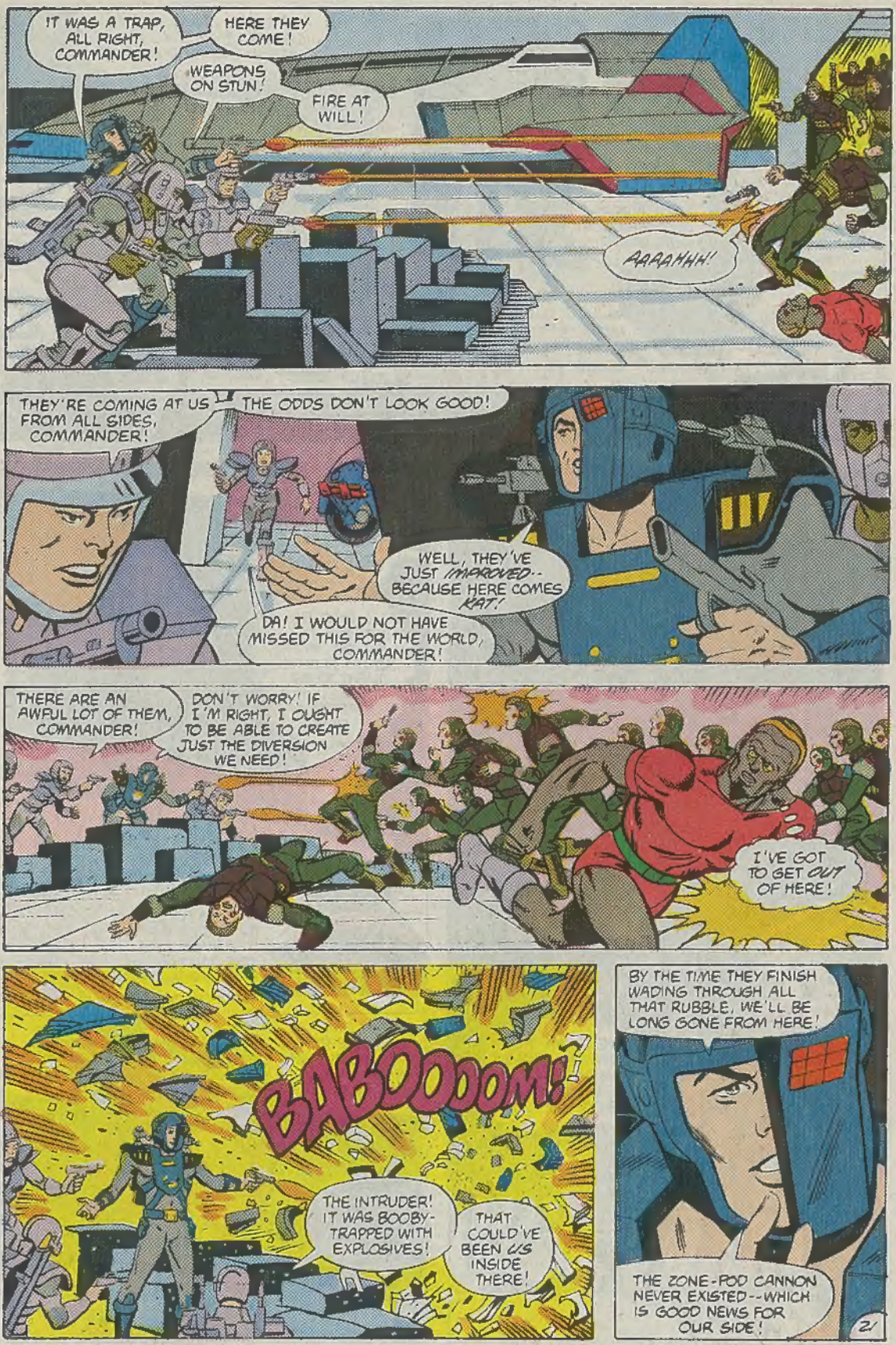
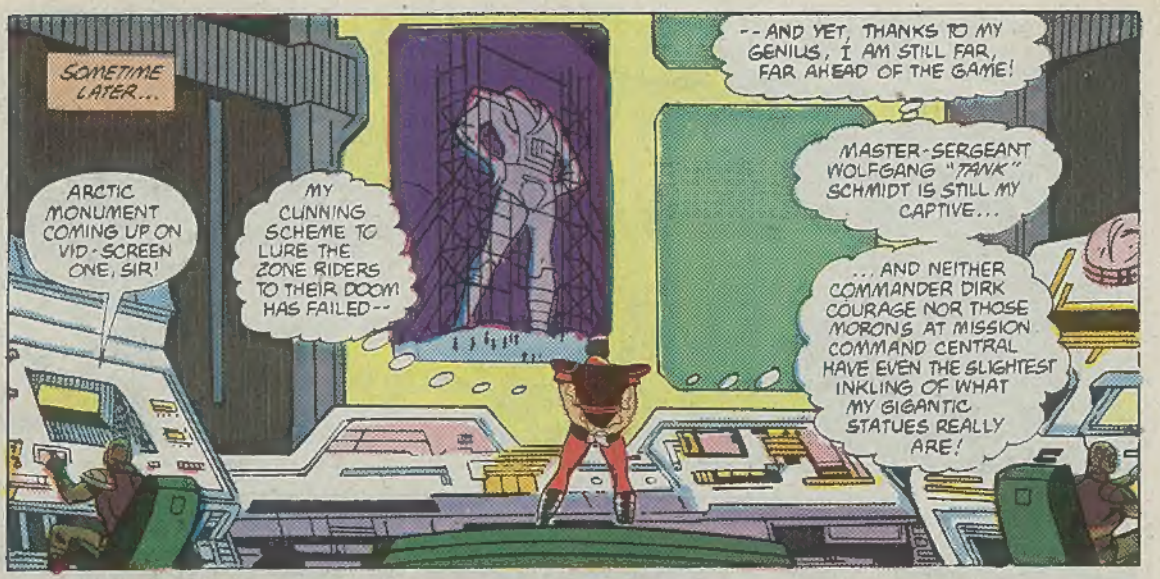
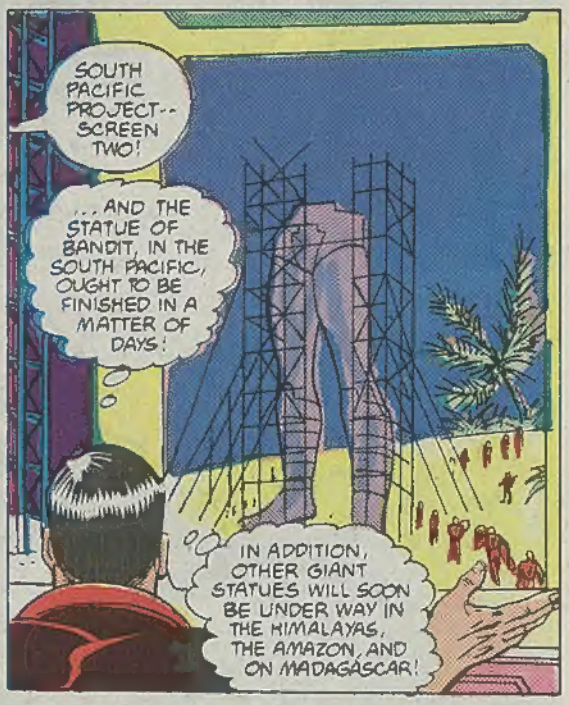

IT WAS A TRAP, ALL RIGHT, COMMANDER!
HERE THEY COME!
WEAPONS ON STUN!
FIRE AT WILL!
AAAAHHH!
THEY'RE COMING AT US FROM ALL SIDES, COMMANDER!
THE ODDS DON'T LOOK GOOD!
WELL, THEY'VE JUST IMPROVED-- BECAUSE HERE COMES KAT!
DA! I WOULD NOT HAVE MISSED THIS FOR THE WORLD, COMMANDER!
THERE ARE AN AWFUL LOT OF THEM, COMMANDER!
DON'T WORRY! IF I'M RIGHT, I OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO CREATE JUST THE DIVERSION WE NEED!
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
BABOOOOM!
THE INTRUDER! IT WAS BOOBY-TRAPPED WITH EXPLOSIVES!
THAT COULD'VE BEEN US INSIDE THERE!
BY THE TIME THEY FINISH WADING THROUGH ALL THAT RUBBLE, WE'LL BE LONG GONE FROM HERE!
THE ZONE-POD CANNON NEVER EXISTED--WHICH IS GOOD NEWS FOR OUR SIDE!
21


SOMETIME LATER...
ARCTIC MONUMENT COMING UP ON VID-SCREEN ONE, SIR!
MY CUNNING SCHEME TO LURE THE ZONE RIDERS TO THEIR DOOM! HAS FAILED--
--AND YET, THANKS TO MY GENIUS, I AM STILL FAR, FAR AHEAD OF THE GAME!
MASTER-SERGEANT WOLFGANG "TANK" SCHMIDT IS STILL MY CAPTIVE...
... AND NEITHER COMMANDER DIRK COURAGE NOR THOSE MORONS AT MISSION COMMAND CENTRAL HAVE EVEN THE SLIGHTEST INKLING OF WHAT MY GIGANTIC STATUES REALLY ARE!

EVEN NOW, THE STATUE OF ME, IN THE ARCTIC, IS ON THE VERGE OF COMPLETION...


SOUTH PACIFIC PROJECT-- SCREEN TWO!
... AND THE STATUE OF BANDIT, IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, OUGHT TO BE FINISHED IN A MATTER OF DAYS!
IN ADDITION, OTHER GIANT STATUES WILL SOON BE UNDER WAY IN THE HIMALAYAS, THE AMAZON, AND ON MADAGASCAR!

BY THE TIME THE ZONE RIDERS CAN EVEN GUESS THEIR TRUE SIGNIFICANCE...
... THE ENTIRE EARTH WILL BE MINE!!
TO BE CONTINUED!

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L-3019

Report from Major General Steven Q McFarland
To United Nations Security Council
Re Personnel Dossier

It has come to my attention that the esteemed Council has requested background information concerning the lives of the team that has come to be known as the *Zone Riders*. No finer fighting force has ever existed and their records speak for themselves.

The Zone Riders, our last hope against the menace of the *Spiral Zone*, are led by Commander *Dirk Courage*, U.S. Special Forces, Black-Light Unit. Courage was an honors graduate of West Point Academy, where he majored in Military History and Tactics. This extensive background in ancient and modern warfare campaigns has served him well. In fact, his treatise on guerrilla warfare has been included in every book published on military strategy and tactics since his essay first appeared in print.

Shortly after his graduation, Courage entered the Desert Wars conflict. Trapped behind enemy lines, he led a small band of soldiers in a strike on a base previously thought to be unreachable and impregnable. He and his men captured the base in the pivotal Seven Hills Battle, which turned the tide of the Desert Wars. Courage received the Purple Heart, the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Silver Star and other commendations for bravery in the face of overwhelming odds.

Following the Desert Wars, Courage was reassigned to the top secret Black-Light Unit, where he perfected and implemented many anti-terrorist and counter-insurgency strategies that have since been incorporated around the globe.

Although Courage has immersed himself in his studies of military history and battle strategy, I have been led to believe that his study is not the only source of his military prowess. It's in his blood. Recent evidence of family genealogy reveals that Courage is directly descended from Tecumseh, the renowned Indian leader and battle tactician. The trace of Indian blood flowing through Dirk Courage's veins may account for his incredible tracking ability, and his keen senses, which can detect subtle differences in the wind blowing through the trees or a natural sound sounding unnaturally out of place.

Master Sergeant *Wolfgang "Tank" Schmidt* comes to us from the United German Tactical Squad, Tank Unit. The squad was formerly attached to West German forces, before the Spiral Zone cut across both East and West Germany, inadvertantly uniting both governments in a common cause for the first time since World War II.

Tank attended the University of Munich for three years, dropping out prior to completing his degree, although his academic standing was unimpeachable. He does not discuss the reasons for his sudden resignation, which came as a surprise to both friends and faculty. He describes himself today as largely self-taught.

He enlisted in the service shortly after leaving school. He earned his nickname from his build and the fact that he can repair, adjust and adapt any mechanism from the biggest tank to the tiniest bugging device. He has received numerous decorations for bravery in combat. Three years prior to Overlord's first Spiral Zone assault, he was assigned to an international anti-terrorist force, in association with the United States Black-Light team. There, he met Commander Dirk Courage for the first time.

Tank's wife, *Gabrielle*, died in a tragic traffic accident four years ago. His son, Joseph, was in an area engulfed by the Spiral Zone in the first attack. Tank has vowed to use every means at his disposal to find and rescue his son.

First Lieutenant *Hiro Taka* completed preparatory school as required, but began at age fourteen to receive additional private education at a number of retreats and monasteries scattered throughout Japan. He became fascinated with the ancient teachings of one of the original Zen masters; Hakuin, founder of Rinzai Zen. He also excelled at all forms of martial arts, from archery to kendo to karate.

Prior to his selection to the Zone Riders, Hiro had served militarily in the Asian Defense Alliance, where he single-handedly captured General Keye during the bloody Burmese Campaign of 2005. Of all the candidates to the Zone Riders, Hiro was chosen not only because of his record, but also because of his unbelievable martial arts skills, including his uncanny ability to walk without making a sound, making Hiro an

Second Lieutenant *Max Jones* also has a distinguished record, of sorts. His educational background is confined to high school and two years of junior college, but he managed to distinguish himself quite a bit, particularly in shop and auto class, where he excelled. His reputation was double-edged. He could be relied upon to get things done quickly on the one hand, yet drive faculty and fellow students to distraction on the other. His brief college record indicates some incident involving allegations that he and another student assembled an entire tractor in the dean's office. The allegations were never proven, but it was enough to make Jones "stand out" on campus.

Jones carried this reputation with him into the military, often described as "reckless" and "a daredevil."

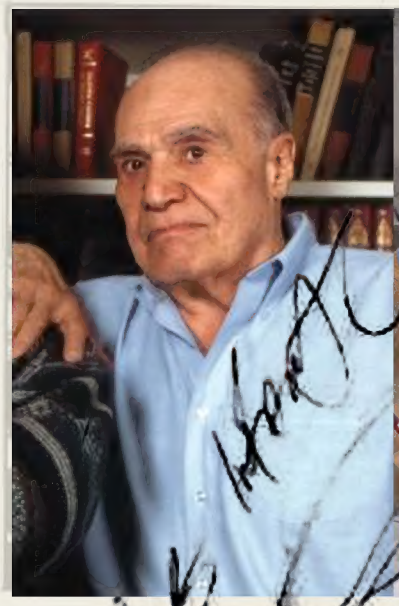
Bumped from one unit to another, he racked up both an impressive list of commendations and complaints. The complaints came not from commanding officers, but from peer officers who, it's been suggested, were jealous of Jones' ability to go around them, tunnel beneath them, leap above them or go through them when his unit needed something that someone else had.

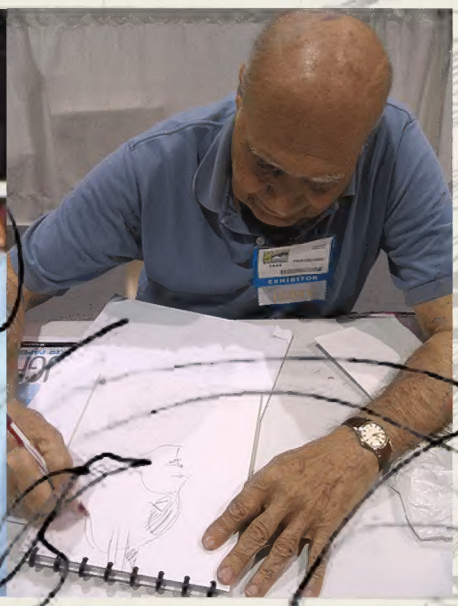
His other notable skill is his driving. An amateur stunt driver back in his hometown of Chicago, he brought that skill to bear on several military missions, the most important of which was the surprise attack at eh-Hazani Flats during the Desert Wars. Surrounded on all sides, Jones drove straight through enemy ranks, avoiding mines and incoming fire, delivering a message straight to the nearest commander—Commander Dirk Courage. Jones is now Courage's second-in-command of the Zone Riders.

The rest of Jones' family, his mother, father and sister, have been lost inside the Spiral Zone.

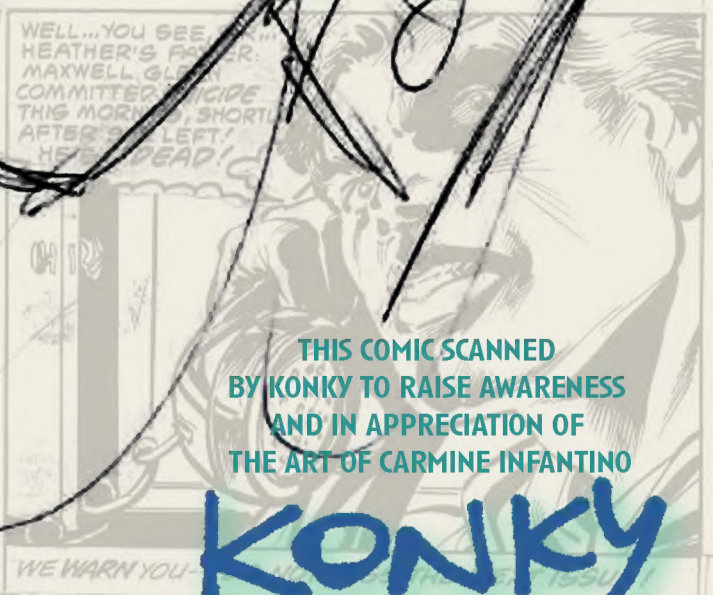
Corporal *Katerina Anastasia* was an honor student during her preparatory school career in the U.S.S.R. She was sponsored into the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, where she also became a top student. She majored in ecobiology as well as cryptographic research.

Katerina has had little combat experience in the Special Forces, although she is a trained field soldier and performed extremely well on all missions since becoming a member of the Zone Riders. She is thoroughly schooled in all military and survival techniques. She was chosen to the squad after research determined her background in ecobiology, particularly atmospheric biology, a must when dealing with the Spiral Zone. Her breakthrough work that ultimately reversed Earth's Greenhouse Effect made her celebrated throughout scientific circles. If anyone can determine an antidote to the Spiral Zone, it will be Katerina.





"UH, HEATHER GLENN ISN'T HERE
THE MOMENT! THIS IS MATT MURDOC
"OH! I'VE HEARD OF YO MR. MURDOCK YOU'RE MS. GLENN'S ATTORNEY I--I GUESS I CAN TELL YOU..."
"TELL ME WHAT?"



THIS COMIC SCANNED
BY KONKY TO RAISE AWARENESS
AND IN APPRECIATION OF
THE ART OF CARMINE INFANTINO

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